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Men's Basketball Preview: Eagles Cap Texas Swing at UTA

Tipoff is 8:15 p.m. ET on the GS Sports Network.

Marc Gignac



Tim Cowie

Shawn O'Connell and the Eagles start 2016 at UT Arlington.

Men's Basketball | 1/1/2016 5:01:00 PM

Georgia Southern (4-7, 0-1) vs. UT Arlington (10-2, 1-0)

Saturday, Jan. 2 - College Park Center (7,000) – 8:15 p.m. ET

[Live Video](#) | [Live Stats](#)

Radio: 103.7 WBMZ-FM (Statesboro/Metter/Swainsboro), 102.1 WZAT-FM (Savannah), 1370 WLOP-AM (Jesup)

Last meeting: 3/5/2015, W 76-64 (Hanner)

Probable Starters:

#2 [Mike Hughes](#)

#3 [Ike Smith](#)

#4 [Tookie Brown](#)

#5 [Devince Boykins](#)

#14 [Coye Simmons](#)

Layup Line

- Georgia Southern travels to UT Arlington for a Sun Belt contest Saturday.
- It's the first of two meetings against the Mavericks this season.
- Following Saturday's game, the Eagles play four consecutive contests at home.
- Georgia Southern is 1-4 in its last five and coming off an 80-66 setback at Texas State Wednesday.
- Freshman [Tookie Brown](#) was named the Sun Belt Player of the Week by College Sports Madness. He averaged 24 points, 4.3 assists, three rebounds and two steals in three games from Dec. 15-22. Brown shot 51 percent from field and 56 percent from 3-point range.
- Georgia Southern is 1-6 on the road this season and has lost its last three on the road.
- With 11-of-12 scholarship student-athletes who are freshmen, redshirt freshmen or sophomores (92 percent), Georgia Southern has the highest percentage of underclassmen on its current roster of the 345 NCAA Division I squads. Liberty (91 percent), Ohio State (85 percent), Fairleigh Dickinson (85 percent) and Wyoming (80 percent) round out the top-5.
- Georgia Southern lost 76 percent of its scoring and 72 percent of its rebounding from last season.
- The Eagles were picked 10th in the Preseason Sun Belt Conference Coaches Poll.
- UT Arlington has won five in a row and posted an 85-70 win over Georgia State in their Sun Belt opener Wednesday in College Park Center.
- UT Arlington won early-season road games at Ohio State (73-68) and Memphis (68-64).
- The Mavericks are 6-0 at home.
- The Mavericks were picked eighth in the Sun Belt Preseason Coaches Poll.

The Series

- This will be the fourth meeting in the series, which began in 1972. The teams renewed the series last season as members of the Sun Belt Conference and split two meetings with each team winning at home.
- **Last Meeting - Hanner Fieldhouse (3/5/15):**
 - [Jelani Hewitt](#) collected 18 points, seven steals and four assists, and Georgia Southern outscored UT Arlington by 18 points in the second half en route to a 76-64 win over the Mavs.
 - [Eric Ferguson](#), playing in his final home game and celebrating Senior Night along with Hewitt and five other seniors, tallied 15 points and nine rebounds. Fellow senior [Trent Wiedeman](#) had nine points and five boards, and freshman [Mike Hughes](#) added 16 points and five rebounds. Freshman [Jake Allsmiller](#) scored 10.

- Jamel Outler led UT Arlington with 23 points, while Lonnie McClanahan contributed 14 points and nine assists. After shooting 63 percent in the first half, the Mavs connected on just 9-of-28 in the second period, and Georgia Southern forced 25 UT Arlington turnovers in the game.
- The Eagles trailed by 11 points early in the second half but used a monstrous 28-7 run to take control of the contest. Hewitt scored eight points during the stretch, which was ignited by a Wiedeman dunk off a Ferguson feed, and Hughes added six points. A [Kyle Doyle](#) free throw gave the Eagles a 58-48 cushion with 8:08 remaining.
- **Last Meeting in College Park Center (3/5/15):**
- Lonnie McClanahan hit a driving right-handed layup with 14.1 seconds left to lift UT Arlington to a 62-61 win over Georgia Southern in the Sun Belt Conference opener for both teams.
- [Eric Ferguson](#), who finished with 17 points and 16 rebounds, gave the Eagles their first lead of the game, skying high for a tip-in with 28.1 seconds left. After a timeout, McClanahan got a flat ball screen at the top of the key, drove right and hit a running layup.
- [Jelani Hewitt](#) brought the ball down the floor for the Eagles, and was set to try a step-back jumper but with hands in his face, elected to pass [Trent Wiedeman](#), whose jumper from the free-throw line rimmed out. The ball was tipped around on the rebound as time ran out.

Quick Hitters

- Freshman [Ike Smith](#) is one of two freshman in the league ranked in the top-20 in both points (11.7) and rebounds (5.1).
- [Tookie Brown](#) has scored 20-plus points in four games, including three of the last four. He is averaging 19.3 points in the last eight contests and ranks seventh in the league in scoring.
- Sophomore [Mike Hughes](#) has started 41 of 42 games in his career.
- Hughes' six steals vs. Stetson Dec. 22, were a career high and two shy of the school record.
- Hughes and Brown are tied for the league lead in steals with 2.1 a contest.
- The Eagles are averaging 80.5 points a game this season and have scored 80-plus points in five games, including three of their last five. Georgia Southern scored 80-plus points in just six contests last year.
- Eleven different Eagles have scored 10 or more points in a game this season.
- [Devonte Boykins](#) has been named one of 154 nominees for the NABC Allstate Insurance Good Works Team.
- Georgia Southern is 16-3 in Hanner Fieldhouse in its last 19 contests there.
- Georgia Southern posted a 4-6 record in the non-conference portion of its schedule.
- The Eagles played their Sun Belt opener on the road for the second straight season. Georgia Southern is 0-2 in Sun Belt openers.
- Georgia Southern played its first ranked opponent since 2008 when the Eagles traveled to No. 7/6 Duke Dec. 15. Their last game against a ranked opponent was also at Duke Nov. 11, 2008.
- Georgia Southern's 21 steals against Bob Jones (11/30) was one shy of the school record set against Little Rock in 1981 and tied against The Citadel in 2004.

- After not playing an SEC opponent since a 78-75 loss to Auburn Dec. 30, 2011, the Eagles have faced two this season. Georgia Southern fell 82-72 at Ole Miss Nov. 16 and 92-62 at Auburn Nov. 20.
- Georgia Southern's 116 points in a 116-49 season-opening win over Webber International Nov. 13 were tied for the 16th most all-time and the most since a 116-73 neutral site win over UC Davis Nov. 12, 2006, which was the 2006-07 season opener.
- The Eagles' 40 3-point attempts tied for the second-most in school history (West Georgia, 1/2/1992).

Boarding the Mothership

- Thirteen Georgia Southern games will be broadcast on the ESPN family of Networks this season.
- Games at Duke (12/15) and vs. Georgia State at home (2/23) will air on ESPN2.
- Eight Sun Belt contests will be broadcast live on ESPN3, and the Eagles' game at USC Upstate Nov. 27 was shown on ESPN3.
- The matchups at Ole Miss and Auburn were shown on the SEC Network +.